

REMARKS

This Amendment cancels claims 10, 17, 25-34, 37, and 38 and amends claims 1, 8, 11, 12, 15, 18-22, 35, and 39 in accordance with the original disclosure. Support for the claim amendments is found, for example, in the canceled claims. Claims 1, 5-9, 11-16, 18-24, 35, 39, and 40 remain in this application.

Claim Objections

Claims 1, 8, 9, 11, and 37 stand objected to for the informalities noted in paragraph 4 of the Office Action. As set forth above, Applicants have amended these claims to correct the informalities. Reconsideration of the objections to these claims is respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 26 and 27 stand rejected for anticipation by U.S. Patent No. 5,922,505 to Sonokawa. As set forth above, Applicants have canceled claims 26 and 27, thereby rendering these rejections moot.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) and § 103(a)

Claims 1, 5-7, 9, 15, 16, 24, 25, 35, and 40 stand rejected for anticipation by U.S. Patent No. 6,537,379 to Vajo et al. Claim 8 stands rejected for obviousness over the teachings of Vajo. However, in paragraph 10 of the Office Action, the Examiner states that claims 10-14, 17-23, and 37-39 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration of these rejections is respectfully requested.

A. Claims 1, 5-9, and 11-14

As set forth above, Applicants have canceled allowable claim 10 and have added the limitations therefrom into independent claim 1. Therefore, independent claim 1 is now believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 5-9 and 11-14 depend from, and add further limitations to, claim 1. Since these claims depend from a claim believed to be in condition for allowance, these claims are also believed to be in condition for allowance.

B. Claims 15, 16, and 18-24

Applicants have canceled allowable claim 17 and have added the limitations therefrom into independent claim 15. Therefore, independent claim 15 is now believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the rejection of claim 15 is respectfully requested.

Claims 16 and 18-24 depend from, and add further limitations to, claim 15. Since these claims depend from a claim believed to be in condition for allowance, these claims are also believed to be in condition for allowance.

C. Claims 35, 39, and 40

Applicants have canceled allowable claim 38 and have added the limitations therefrom into independent claim 35. Therefore, claim 35 is now believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the rejection of claim 35 is respectfully requested.

Claims 39 and 40 depend from claim 35 and, therefore, are also believed to be in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the objections and rejections, and allowance of claims 1, 5-9, 11-16, 18-24, 35, 39, and 40 are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew C. Siminerio", written over a horizontal line.

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
October 26, 2006

ACS/LNF